

Beyond the Frontier

A Romance of the Western Wilderness and of Two Eighteenth Century Lovers

By Randall Parrish

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS. Adele is Chevet's (who tells the story) is a Colonial girl, living with her uncle, Hugue Chevet, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence...

CHAPTER VII. We Exchange Confidences.

(Continued.)

O not break down, little girl," he entreated. "It is better so, for now we understand each other.

You sought to shield me, and I endeavored to protect you. I was a strange misunderstanding and, but for the accident to the canoe, might have had a tragic ending."

"You would never have told me?"

"Of seeing you there? Of suspecting you? Could you think that possible?"

"But you would have been condemned; the evidence was all against you."

"Let us not talk of that now," he insisted. "We have come back to a faith in each other. You believe my word?"

"Yes."

"And I yours."

"His hand clasped tightened and there was that in his eyes which frightened me."

"No, no, Monsieur," I exclaimed, and drew back quickly. "Do not say more, for I am here with you alone, and there will be trouble enough when Cassion returns."

"Do I not know that," he said, yet clasping my hands. "Still I can rely on no harm for us to understand each other. You care nothing for Cassion; you do not love him, and there is naught sacred in your marriage. We are in the wilderness, not Quebec, and La Barre has little authority here. You have protected me with your silence, which is not because you cared for me?"

"Yes, Monsieur; you have been my friend."

"Your friend; is that all?"

"Is that not enough, Monsieur? I like you well; I would save you from injustice. You could not respect me if I said more, for my Monsieur, Cassion's wife by rite of Holy Church, I do not fear him—he is a coward; but I fear dishonor, Monsieur, for I am Adele la Chesnaye. I would respect myself, and you."

The light of conquest vanished from the gray eyes. For a moment he stood silent and motionless, then he drew a step backward and bowed.

"Your rebuke is just, Madame," he said soberly.

"We of the frontier grow careless in a land where might is right, and I have had small training save in camp and field. I crave your pardon for my offense."

So contrite was his expression I had to smile, realizing for the first time the depth of his interest in my good will; yet the feeling which swayed me was not altogether one of pleasure. He was not one to yield so quietly, or to long restrain the words burning his tongue, yet I surrendered to my first impulse, and in a moment I was in this endeavoring to shield one another from suspicion, and, as a result, are both equally in peril. Our hands alone together here will mean Monsieur Cassion, and he will use all his power for revenge. My testimony will only make your case more desperate should I confess what I know, and you might cast suspicion upon me."

"No, I do not, and yet, please, it might be better for us both if I made full confession. I hesitate merely because Cassion would doubt my word; would conclude that I merely sought to protect you. He and others—fair-minded judges at St. Louis—I should have no hesitancy in telling the whole story, for there is nothing I did of which I am ashamed but here, where Cassion has full authority, such a confession would mean your death."

"The word would be: I am an officer of the St. Lawrence."

"The more reason why he would. I know Monsieur Cassion even better than you do. He has conversed with me pretty freely, and he has sufficient cause to bear his hatred of La Salle, and his desire to do him evil. No fear of your chief will ever deter him from his course in this country to compel obedience. I overheard the Governor's orders to keep you under close surveillance, and Cassion will jump at the chance of finding you guilty of crime. Now my broken pledge gives him ample excuse."

"But it was not broken except through my own fault," he argued. "He throughly cannot blame you because I saved your life."

"I doubt if that has slightest weight. All he needs is the fact that you were here together. That fact will obscure all else in his mind."

"He believes that that you feel interest in him never denied it; the fact which ripples, however, is his knowledge that I feel no interest whatever in him. But we waste time. Our chief course is a discovery of Hugue Chevet's real murderer. Know you anything to warrant suspicion?"

De Artigny did not answer at once, his eyes looking out of the white crested waters of the lake.

"No, Madame," he said at length gravely. "The last time Chevet was seen alive, so far as I know, was when he left the boats in company with Monsieur Cassion to return to the Mission House."

"It was already quite dark."

"They did not arrive together, and Cassion reported that Chevet had remained at the beach in charge of the

canoes."

"You saw Cassion when he arrived?"

"Yes, and before; I was at the window, and I saw him approach across the open space. He was alone, and appeared at ease."

"What did he do, and say, after he entered the house?"

"Absolutely nothing to attract notice; he seemed very weary, and, as soon as he had eaten, lay down on the bench, and fell asleep."

"Are you sure he slept?"

"I felt no doubt; there was nothing strange about his actions, but as soon as possible I left the room. You surely do not suspect him?"

"He was the last to be seen with Chevet; they left the beach together, yet the murdered man failed to appear at the Mission House, and Cassion in charge at the beach."

"But no one could act so indifferent, after just committing such a crime. When you stepped in through the window what did you see?"

"Only the priests about the table talking, and Cassion seemingly sound asleep. Could there be any other who he should regard the death of Chevet?"

"I know of none. My uncle felt bitter over the concealment of my father, and no doubt he too had exhausted words, but there was no open quarrel. Chevet was rough and headstrong, yet he was not killed in fight, for the knife thrust was from behind."

"Ay, a coward's blow. Chevet possessed no papers of value?"

"I shook my head."

"No mention was ever made to me. But, Monsieur, you are still wet, and must be cold in this wind. Why do you not build the fire, and dry your clothes?"

"The wind does have an icy feel," he admitted, "but this is a poor spot. I'll wonder in the wood shadow there is more warmth, and besides, I have a better outlook for the canoes. Have you strength now to climb the bluff?"

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"I did not even require his aid, and was at the top nearly as soon as he. It was a pleasant spot, a heavy forest, and there is naught sacred in your marriage. We are in the wilderness, not Quebec, and La Barre has little authority here. You have protected me with your silence, which is not because you cared for me?"

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"Yes, Monsieur; you have been my friend."

"Your friend; is that all?"

Such Is Life

By Maurice Ketten



Woman thought that marriage was a sacred rite.

I saw a canoe emerge from the shadow of the bluff. The slight called to the canoe, and over they went into the lake. I realized instantly what course Cassion would pursue. His hand of De Artigny would be fanned into flame by discovery that we were alone together. He possessed the power, the authority to put this man forever out of his way, and there was the lady struggling. I reached out and touched her, but lost hold, and then the Sieur de Artigny leaped overboard and the storm whirled us off into the fog. I saw no more."

"You do not know that he reached her?"

"No, Monsieur; the lady sank when I lost my grip; I do not even know if she came to again."

Cassion stood motionless, staring intently at the bluff. I almost thought he must have seen me, but there was no outcry, and finally he seated himself.

"Go on, round the long point yonder, and if there is no sign there we will return," he said grimly. "The draft kept close to the shore, evidently searching for any sign of the lost canoe, and the man in the stern stood up, pointing and evidently giving orders. The draft kept close to the shore, evidently searching for any sign of the lost canoe, and the man in the stern stood up, pointing and evidently giving orders. The draft kept close to the shore, evidently searching for any sign of the lost canoe, and the man in the stern stood up, pointing and evidently giving orders."

"I turned and ran down the bank to the shore, and glancing at the bow, I saw a faint glimmer of blue smoke, dug dirt up with my hands, and covered the coils, until they were completely extinguished. Then I crept back to the bluff summit and lay down to watch."

"The canoe rounded the curve in the distance, and headed straight across the lake, and I saw a faint glimmer of blue smoke, dug dirt up with my hands, and covered the coils, until they were completely extinguished. Then I crept back to the bluff summit and lay down to watch."

"I could see now clearly the faces of those in the canoe—the dark, expressionless countenances of the Indians, and the white man, all gazing intently at the shore line, as they swept past, a soldier in the bow and Pere Alouez and Cassion at the stern, the latter standing, gripping the steering paddle. The sound of his rasping, disagreeable voice reached the first."

"This is the spot," he exclaimed, pointing at the bluff, and just before the storm struck. But there is no wreck here, no sign of landing. What is your judgment, Pere?"

"Monsieur," answered the priest. "We have covered the entire coast, and found no sign of any survivor; no doubt they were all drowned."

"The likely story, for there was small hope for any swimmer in such a sea." Cassion's eyes turned to the others in the boat. "Any you, Deschartes, you were in the canoe with the Sieur de Artigny, tell us again what happened, and if this be not the place."

"The soldier in the bow lifted his head, and I saw the white man's face."

"I know little of the place, Monsieur," he answered gruffly, "though it would seem as if I recalled the

forked tree yonder showing through a rift in the fog. All I know is that one of the paddles broke in the sergeant's canoe, and over they went into the lake. I realized instantly what course Cassion would pursue. His hand of De Artigny would be fanned into flame by discovery that we were alone together. He possessed the power, the authority to put this man forever out of his way, and there was the lady struggling. I reached out and touched her, but lost hold, and then the Sieur de Artigny leaped overboard and the storm whirled us off into the fog. I saw no more."

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with a small, peaked face, a mop of black hair, and a pair of shrewd, humorous eyes. His dress was that of a common soldier, but the blue forage cap gripped in one hand, yet he stood stiff as if on parade. In spite of his strange, uncouth appearance there was that in his face which won my favor, and I held out my hand.

"I am a soldier of France, M. de Artigny tells me."

"Yes, Madame, of the Regiment Carignan-Salliers," he answered.

"I wonder how you served long?"

"My father was an officer in that regiment—Capt. la Chesnaye."

The expression on the man's face changed magically.

"You the daughter of Capt. la Chesnaye," he exclaimed, the words bursting forth uncontrolled, "and married to Cassion! how can this be?"

"You knew him then—my father?"

"Ay, Madame; I was with him at the Richelieu, and the Village of the Mohawks, and at Bois de Blanc, where he died. I am Jacques Barbeau, a soldier for twenty years; he did not speak to you of me?"

"I was but girl when he was killed, and we seldom met, for he was usually on campaign. Yet, what do you mean by this expression of surprise at my marriage to Monsieur Cassion?"

He hesitated, evidently regretting his impulsive speech, and gazing from my face into the stern eyes of de Artigny.

"Monsieur, Madame, I spoke hastily; it was not my place."

"That was the word, Barbeau," replied the Sieur, grimly. "Yet the words have been said, and the lady has a right to have them explained. Was there any quarrel between your father and this Francois Cassion?"

"Ay, there was, and bitter, although I know nothing as to the cause. Cassion and La Barre—the whom I now hear is Governor of New France—were allies opposed to Capt. la Chesnaye, and but for reports they made he would have been the Colonel. He struck Cassion in the mean tent, and they were to fight the very morning the Ironsides met us at Bois de Blanc. 'Twas the talk of the men that the Captain was shot from behind."

"By Cassion?"

"That I cannot say; yet the bullet entered behind the ear, yet I was first to reach him and he had no other enemy in the Regiment Carignan-Salliers. The feeling against M. Cassion was so strong that he resigned in the first place, and never heard this."

I could not answer, but stood silent with bowed head. I felt De Artigny place his hand on my shoulder, and he said gravely, as though he felt the necessity of an explanation. "She was at school in a convent at Quebec, and no wonder that she was ignorant of the truth. The lady did not know."

I looked at the soldier, and his eyes were grave and honest.

"Barbeau," he answered, "it can do no harm."

De Artigny's hand was still on my shoulder, but his glance did not seek my face.

"There is some low trick here, Barbeau," he began soberly, "but the details are not clear. Madame has trusted me as a friend, and confided all she knows, and I will tell the facts to you as I understand them. False reports were made to France regarding Capt. la Chesnaye. We have

How would YOU answer the question "Who is guilty?" if you were set to solving this problem! The problem is

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